

JOHN LAWRENCE, SENIOR

1746 – 1825

By

Robert L. Jackson, August, 2006

John Lawrence, Senior, my paternal 4th great grandfather, was born on March 02, 1746. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) list his place of birth in Massachusetts although the headstone at his gravesite lists Connecticut as the site. Since the engraving of the tombstone was under the supervision of his wife Mary, the site might have been Canterbury or Norwich, Connecticut. The vital records of Norwich, Connecticut indicate that a John Lawrence was the sixth of eight children born to Samuel and Mary Lawrence. The DAR indicate that he was the son of Jonathan Lawrence and Hannah (Robbins) Lawrence, the latter of Walpole, Massachusetts. The many well-documented genealogies available on the internet have not resolved this issue. Equally valued genealogies can be found representing either view. Possibly the most researched genealogy on this branch of the Lawrence surname has been done by Hoepfer (1). Over forty years of study, the parentage remains an enigma to that researcher. Recent developments in DNA, Y chromosome research may finally provide us within sufficient evidence to make a decision (2). There is clearly enough evidence from the DNA studies to indicate that, in either case, both stem from John Lawrence of Wissett, England (1609 – 1663). John Lawrence of Wissett immigrated to America around 1638, married first Elizabeth and had 13 children and married second, Susannah Batchelder and added two more children. (A second paper entitled *The Search for the Parents of John Lawrence, 1746-1825* is currently being prepared and will detail the genealogical resources and evidential materials discovered.)

Not much is known regarding the early life of our John, until his marriage to Mary Cleveland. Mary, my paternal 4th great grandmother, was born in Canterbury, Connecticut on January 17, 1748 (ns) She was the daughter of Josiah Cleveland and Sarah (Lawrence) Cleveland. The marriage took place in Walpole, Massachusetts on February 02, 1769. John was known to be in Vermont at the age of 22 and, after the marriage, the two of them struck out for Vermont on horseback. Grandson Samuel N. Lawrence writes about the stories Mary Lawrence told regarding the difficulties of the horseback ride to Bennington. It was not a trip remembered with joy!

John purchased a section of land in Bennington from Brotherton Daggett on May 07, 1770 and was described as follows:

Know all Men by these Presents, that I Brotherton Daggett of Bennington in the Colony of New Hampshire alias New York Yeoman for and in consideration of sixty pounds/dollars at six shillings & dollars- to me in hand paid before delivery hereof by John Lawrence of the Town aforesaid that Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge have given granted, bargained and sold and by these Presents do give grant bargain sell alien and convey and confirm unto him the said John Lawrence to his Heirs and Assigns, all my Right Title Interest and Estate Property and Demand of in and unto all that Parcel of Land in Said Bennington (viz) The

Southwest Quarter of the Right of Land N degrees Six, supposed to be Ninety acres be the same more or less—to have and to hold the aforesaid granted Premises with all the Privileges thereto belonging to him the said John Lawrence to his heirs and Assigns to his and their proper use benefit and behoof forever, so that neither I my Heirs nor Assigns nor any Person or Persons claiming from by or under me or them shall ever have any Right, Claim Interest or Demand Therein By Notice of any Act or Acts already done had or suffered whatsoever—in witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal—Seventh Day of May in the Eleventh Year of his Majestie Reign Anno Domini 1770.

Signed Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of
Samuel Stafford
Samuel Montagne

Bennington, March 28, 1781 Personally appeared Col. Samuel Stafford and Samuel Montagne evidence to the within deed and made solemn oath that they saw Brotherton Daggett, Signer and Sealer to the Deed within-sign seal and deliver it.

Sworn before me, Samuel Robinson, Justice of the Peace (3)

It was in this place, at this site, that 10 children were born to this union. John and Mary resided there the remainder of their lives. John, like most of the male residents of Bennington, was a minuteman during the revolutionary war. He was called into service on several occasions, including the now famous Battle of Bennington, serving with General Stark's Army, August 16, 1777. The army consisted of 3 regiments of the New Hampshire militia under Colonel's Hubbard, Stickney and Nichols, Militia from the East side of Green Mountain under Colonel William Williams of Wilmington, the Vermont Council of Safety, Corps of Rangers under Colonel Herrick, militia from Bennington and vicinity under Colonel Nathaniel Brush including two companies from Bennington, one by Captain Samuel Robinson and a second by Captain Elijah Dewey. A militia from Berkshire County under Colonel Simmons came in later. 1,600 men were involved in the battle (4). John served with the militia from Bennington and vicinity under Colonel Nathaniel Brush in Captain Joseph Stafford's company and Colonel Ebenezer Walbridge's regiment on alarm August 02, 1781 and on August 08, 1781. Also with Captain Samuel Robinson, Colonel Herrick's regiment on alarm in 1780-81.

John was an active community member. An item on the agenda of the Proprietor's meeting of April 17, 1771 contains an order choosing Mr. John Lawrence as "Sealer of Leather." (5) At the same meeting, it was voted that each man shall work four days at highway construction during that year, demonstrating further commitment to the benefit of the "community at large." (5)

The only church in Bennington until 1827 was the First Church, a Congregational Church. Mary had been a staunch Baptist but both John and Mary were involved as members in First Church.(6). Hoeper (1), reviewing religious activity in colonial Bennington, noted that members of the Separatist Church of New Lisbon, Connecticut immigrated into Bennington and held an anomalous position of fellowship with both the Separatists and Congregationalists. Samuel Lawrence, son of John and Mary, was a life long member and deacon of the Congregational Church.

The closest Baptist Church to Bennington was in Pownal, Vermont, some seven miles away. Pownal was the home of John Stanton, one of my paternal 4th great grandfathers!

John Lawrence died on October 27, 1825, on a Thursday, 40 minutes past 12 at noon, age 79 years, 7 months, 25 days. The texts selected for his funeral were Psalms 39, Psalms 90 and Proverbs, Chapter 4, verse 7. John was buried in First Church Cemetery, Bennington, Vermont (7). The headstone reads: "Born in Connecticut March 02, 1746. When he was 22 years of age he moved to Bennington, Vermont, where he died October 27, 1825 in the 80th year of his age." The headstone also reads: "His toils are all ended, His body at rest, his soul to his maker who will deal with it just."

The obituary in the Vermont Gazette, November 8, 1825, read: "John Lawrence. In this town, aged 79 years, one of the first settlers, a genuine Whig Party member, plain and unassuming in his manners, steady and undeviating in his principles, an honest man." (8)

Mary Cleveland Lawrence died February 27, 1836 at 7 o'clock in the morning. The text for her funeral was 1st Thessalonians, 4th chapter beginning at the 13th verse to the end of the chapter. The service was conducted by Elder Willis (7). The newspaper reported Mary's death as follows: "Sunday, February 28, 1836. The death of the widow of the late John Lawrence was announced at a church meeting. The Reverend Hooker was to solemnize a wedding that evening. She was about 89 years of age."

In response to a letter from Russell Lawrence, grandson of John and Mary, Samuel N. Lawrence, another grandson, wrote:

"... I have long been sorry I did not know more of my ancestry but I really know nothing beyond my grandfather, whose name was John and he died when I was quite young. I used to hear grandmother talk much about her relatives whose name was Cleveland and her father's name was Josiah of Norwich, Connecticut and that grandfather was born in Canterbury not far from Norwich and that they came to Vermont on horseback which was a long and tedious journey. She (grandmother) mourned greatly during her later days that she could not hear from or find out anything about her relatives, and my grandfather died before she did find that she had a half-brother living in Otwego in this state (NY) and she did have considerable correspondence with him but I never heard or remember that my grandfather had any brothers and yet he may have had. Grandmother was a Baptist, did not believe in closed communion or that sprinkling was as much a baptism as immersion!"

Following Mary's death, the property passed on to son Samuel, who died in 1861. It then passed on to his son, Samuel N. Lawrence. In 1862, he and his wife Harriet, transferred their part of the land, and in 1864, Alida Lawrence, 2nd wife of Samuel, sold her dower right to the land which came to her husband from John Lawrence.(9)

Eight of the ten children born to John and Mary survived to adulthood. As was the practice at that time, the names of the two that died in infancy, John and Sarah, were assigned again to two other newly born children:

Ruth Lawrence, born 11 May 1770
Pitt Lawrence, born 08 Apr 1772
John Lawrence I, born 11 Mar 1774
Sarah Lawrence I, born 31 May 1776
Lydia Lawrence, born 21 Jul 1778
Sarah Lawrence II, born 12 Jan 1781
Mary Lawrence, born 10 Apr 1783
John Lawrence, Jr., born 07 Jan 1786
Samuel Lawrence, born 11 Dec 1788
Alice Lawrence, born 30 Jan 1792

Following much emigration from Vermont, Samuel was the only son that remained in Bennington. Many Vermonters joined the Westward expansion across New York State into Ohio and finally settling in Michigan.

Included among those that moved was John Lawrence, Jr. and his family. (See the John Lawrence, Jr. paper regarding the plight of the Vermonters and the reasons for the huge emigration in the early 1800's.)

The Last Will and Testament of John Lawrence, Senior, 1746-1825 reads as follows:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, John Lawrence of Bennington in the County of Bennington and state of Vermont, taking into view the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, and wishing to direct the manner in which my estate shall be disposed of to my heirs after my decease, do make this my last will and testament. And first, I will my soul into the hands of a holy and just God, and my body, after my decease to be buried in a Christian manner.

I will and bequeath to my dear wife Mary Lawrence, one third part of my real and personal estate during her lifetime to be set to her by my Executor, as shall be herein afterwards named.

I will and bequeath to my son Samuel Lawrence after paying all my just debts and demands which at the time of my decease shall be due to any person whatsoever. The whole of my landed property lying in Bennington to be for his sole use forever under the reservations and conditions imposed on him to pay my other children as shall be hereafter named in this will. I also will that after the decease of my wife that her third of the land be and remain the property of my son Samuel.

I will and bequeath to my dear son Pitt Lawrence one hundred pounds, equal to three hundred thirty three dollars and thirty-three cents to be paid to him by son Samuel

whom I shall name as Executor of this, my last will and testament on my decease and the decease of my wife, Mary Lawrence.

I will and bequeath to my dear son John Lawrence, three hundred and thirty three dollars and thirty-three cents to be paid to him by my son Samuel on the decease of me and my wife.

I will and bequeath to my beloved daughter Ruth Palmer, the wife of Mr. Seth Palmer, sixty-seven dollars to be paid by my son Samuel after the decease of myself and wife.

I will and bequeath to my beloved daughter Lydia Fay, the wife of Elijah Fay, Junior, sixty-seven dollars to be paid to her by my son Samuel after the decease of myself and my wife.

I will and bequeath to my beloved daughter, Sarah Dimmock the wife of Seth Dimmock sixty-seven dollars to be paid to her by my son Samuel after the decease of myself and my wife.

I will and bequeath to my beloved daughter Mary Stanton, the wife of Lodowick Stanton sixty-seven dollars to be paid to her after the decease of myself and my wife by my son Samuel.

I will and bequeath to my beloved daughter Alice Wagor sixty-seven dollars to be paid to her by my son Samuel after the decease of myself and my wife.

I also will and bequeath that all the rest and residue of my personal estate over and above paying my just debts and funeral charges shall be divided among all my sons and daughters (except the third which is by this will bequeathed to my wife) to be divided between them in the following manner, the sons receiving double to that of the daughters.

And I do hereby constitute and appoint my dear and beloved wife Mary Lawrence and my trusty son Samuel Lawrence to be the Executors of this my last will and testament.

In witness thereof I have herewith set my hand and seal this 29th day of July, 1815.

John Lawrence

In the presence of as witnesses, who in the said presence of the said testator and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names.

Jon Robinson
Polly Merrill
Samuel Fay

Proved, Approved and Recorded, February 04, 1826
Bennington Town Record, Vermont, Book 12, pp 371-372.

In sharp contrast to the difficulties in establishing the parentage of John, it is rather easy to trace Mary Cleveland's roots. A rather extensive and detailed genealogy of the Cleveland families in America was published in 1899. (10) Mary Cleveland's father was Josiah Cleveland, son of Josiah Cleveland, born in 1713 and died 07 May 1793. Her mother, Sarah Lawrence, only daughter of Daniel and Sarah Lawrence, was born in Plainfield, Connecticut on 07 February 1709. and died in Canterbury,

Connecticut on 06 February 1755. (See a completed ancestry of Mary Cleveland in my genealogical record) Mary's parents were married 15 October 1735. Seven children were born to this union, three female and four male children.

Asa Cleveland, born 01 Aug 1736
Lois Cleveland, baptized 16 September 1739
Sarah Cleveland, born 21 March 1742
Moses Cleveland, born 26 June 1744
Mary Cleveland, born 06 January 1748
Lydia Cleveland, born 25 May 1751
Josiah Cleveland, born 03 December, 1753.

Following the death of Mary's mother, Josiah married a second time. His new wife, Mrs. Johanna (Waldo) Brewster, daughter of Edward and Thankful (Dimock) Brewster, and widow of Jonah Brewster. From this marriage three additional children were born:

Letitia Cleveland, born 13 February 1757
Thankful Cleveland, Born 30 December 1759
Abigail Cleveland, born 10 February 1762.

Mary's father lived in Canterbury and worked as a farmer and a tanner. He joined the congregation of the old Congregational Church of Brooklyn in October 1736. He joined the Church of Canterbury in 1745 and signed the covenant in 1746. In April of 1782 he joined the Strict Congregational Church. Josiah Cady, his grandson, remembered him as being "...tall, erect, and venerable looking, a man of dignified deportment. He was a deacon in the Congregational Church of the town, and deeply interested in the questions which exercised the church of the day." (11)

It seems rather strange that Mary lost track of the family until her later years but one could understand this occurring under the strain of staying alive and raising a family in Vermont during that time. It is too bad since her brother, Josiah, became a noted Revolutionary war hero. Hoeper (12) has provided me with a copy of a newspaper article written about Mary's brother's life and death.

Funeral of Capt. Cleaveland

The remains of Capt. Josiah Cleaveland, the Revolutionary hero, whose death at the house of his friend, S. C. Hunt of Charlestown, we noticed on Saturday, were interred with military honors at Mount Auburn yesterday afternoon. The military escort consisted of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery, Lieut. Col. Thompson, the Columbian Guards of Charlestown, Capt. Joy, and the Washington Light Infantry of Boston, Capt. Lawrence. Brigadier-Generals Tyler of this city and Dana of Charlestown, with their respective staffs, were present in uniform. Also his honor, Lieut. Gov. Childs, several members of the council. Hon. Wm. Parmeter, William Lawrence, Esq. and other respected citizens. At half-past 5 the body, with the civil portion of the funeral procession, arrived at the Episcopal church, Bow Street, and the coffin was placed before the altar. It was of mahogany, and bore a simple silver plate, with the brief inscription---

"Capt. Josiah Cleaveland. Died June 30th, 1843. Aged 90 years."

The Rev. Mr. Green read the Episcopal burial service, and an appropriate selection from the Scriptures, and this portion of the exercises was closed by singing the 124th hymn:

"Hear what the voice from heaven declares
To those in Christ who die;
Relieved from all their earthly cares,
They'll reign with him on high."

The reverend pastor now delivered a brief address, in the nature of a memoir of the deceased, and stated that he was born in Canterbury, Connecticut in 1753. He joined the Connecticut volunteers under General Putnam, and arrived with them at Bunker Hill the day before the battle. On the night of the 16th, he had charge of a look-out and was stationed near the very spot where now stands the Episcopal church, to observe the motions of the British on the Boston side, and to give notice if they attempted a landing in Charlestown. Though not regularly commissioned on the 17th, he had a small command among the volunteers, and was so posted as to see the effects of the first discharge of the patriots on the most advance line of the British; of the entire line, he said, only eight were able to stand after the first deadly fire of the Americans. At Dorchester Heights, when the British evacuated, he had a regular commission as ensign. He afterwards participated in all of the principal battles of the Revolution, and rose to the rank of captain, having received his commission from Washington. After the war he returned to his farm. Subsequently he emigrated to Owego, New York. He was present at the laying of the corner stone of the monument, in 1825, and as soon as he made his appearance in the ranks of the Revolutionary soldiers, Lafayette instantly recognized him, and exclaiming—"My God, there is Capt. Cleaveland." - he rushed towards him, and embraced him with the affectionate ardor of a French republican soldier. So deep and delightful an impression had the events of that day made on his mind, that he could not repress the desire to be also present at the ceremonies prepared in honor of the completion of the monument, and hence, at the advanced age of 90, he undertook the patriotic pilgrimage to the battle ground of his youth.

Among his papers were found the muster roll of the company which he commanded in the Revolution, and also a list of the members of the Episcopal church, in which he was a communicant, in Owego- thus showing that what he most cherished in his last earthly thoughts were the achievement of his country's freedom, and the holy religion which had been his consolation and support throughout his eventful life.

After the services in the church, the body was replaced in the hearse, and the funeral cortege, under command of Colonel Thompson, proceeded to the Charlestown branch railroad depot, where a special train was in waiting to convey it to Fresh Pond. From thence the procession moved to Mount Auburn, where Amos Lawrence, Esq., had generously provided a last resting-place for the mortal remains of the venerable patriot. The usual volleys were fired over the grave, and thus the solemn obsequies closed. All arrangements were carried with effect in a manner highly honorable to the military engaged in the duty.

On the very day of Captain Cleaveland's death, a number of gentlemen had completed arrangements, as a token of the veneration for his services, to present him with a splendid walking-stick, a relic of the old Constitution, with the following inscription:

PRESENTED TO
CAPT. JOSIAH CLEAVELAND,
AT BOSTON, JUNE 30th, 1843, AS A TOKEN
OF GRATITUDE AND HIGH ESTEEM FOR
HIS VALOR AND PATRIOTISM.
LONG MAY IT PROP HIS
TIME-HONORED LIMBS.

This was the "relative" that Mary finally located and was able to exchange letters with toward the end of her life in 1836, but doubtless, never knew much about the essence of her brother's life.

A footnote to the story needs to be added:

It was Capt. Josiah Cleaveland's wish to be buried near Bunker Hill and Amos Lawrence, Esq., had him placed in his family lot, Mt. Auburn cemetery; and many years after one who had married into the Lawrence family, wishing to bury his child there and finding no place, had, without consultation with the family-the remains removed to a public lot. Being told of this at the time, at the instance of a great grand-daughter, (Mrs. Francis D. Wadhams of Wilkesbarre, Pa., a lot was purchased in the same cemetery, the remains buried in it and a stone erected over them inscribed as follows:

To the memory of
CAPT. JOSIAH CLEAVELAND
of Owego, N.Y.

"This tablet is erected by those among whom he departed this life, and who felt respect for his private virtues and gratitude for his public services."

"He was born at Canterbury, Connecticut, Dec. 3, 1753. He died at Charlestown, Mass., June 30, 1841."

"He was an officer of the army of freedom. He served his country bravely and faithfully through the whole war of the Revolution. He fought her battles at Bunker Hill, Harlem Heights, White Plains, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, and Yorktown. He sustained an unblemished reputation, and lived in the practice of every Christian virtue. He loved, feared and served God. In the 90th year of his age, he journeyed nearly five hundred miles from home to be present at the completion of the monument on Bunker Hill. He lived to witness that memorable spectacle. He was satisfied. He laid down quietly and yielded up his breath near the scene of his first conflict with the enemies of his country."

"He came among strangers: He died among friends."

REFERENCES

1. Hoeper, Ruth A. Documentation on the Life of John Lawrence, Unpublished collection of research of 40 years, 1950 – 2006
2. Jackson, Robert L. An Ancestral Research Project in Genetic Genealogy, Y Chromosome DNA, Surname: Lawrence, Final report February, 2006.
3. Hoeper, Ruth A. Land Acquisition of John Lawrence, Bennington Town Records, Town Clerk's Office, Bennington, Vermont, p. 67, book 3 of Land Deed.
5. Hoeper, Ruth A. Proprietor's book A-1, through 1786, page 53, Bennington Town Clerk's Record Book, Bennington, Vermont
6. Harwood, Harwood Diaries, Benjamin and Hiram Harwood
7. Langdon, George W. Letter: to Porter J. Lawrence on the death of John and Mary (Cleaveland) Lawrence, 1880. Baraboo, Wisconsin.

(In possession of Robert L. Jackson)

8. Day, Henry Clay, Index of Historical Writings and Memoranda, 1844-1969. Bennington Museum, Bennington, Vermont. Obituaries.

9. Hoeper, Ruth, Bennington Town Records, Deeds, Book 39 pp 610-612; Book 40, p 414.

10. Cleveland, Edmund J, and Cleveland, Horace G. The Genealogy of Cleveland and Cleaveland Families Descendants of Moses Cleveland. Hartford, Connecticut, 1899.

11. Cleveland, Edmund J. and Cleveland, Horace G. Josiah Cleveland. Hartford, Connecticut, 1899

12. Hoeper, Ruth, Newspaper accounts of the Death of Josiah Cleveland. The Hoeper Collection of Lawrence Documents, Wauwatosa, Wi. 2003.

MARY CLEVELAND LAWRENCE
1748 – 1836

ANCESTRAL ARCHIVES AND LINE OF DESCENT

The following material has been abstracted from the *Cleveland Genealogy*, prepared by Edmund Janes Cleveland and published in 1899. Other documentary evidence has been used when available. Cleveland begins his family history with a Prologue, tracing the name from its beginnings in the Eleventh century after the conquest.

While the dates are approximate, the sequence appears correct. Generation thirteen and following generations have been fairly well established so that we can be quite assured of it's accuracy. Moses Cleveland was the first of the family to immigrate to America in the 17th century.

1. Thorkil de Cliveland and wife, after the conquest.
2. Uctred de Cliveland and wife
1249 A.D.
3. Robert de Cleiveland and wife
1268 A.D.
4. Robert de Cleiveland and wife
1300 A.D.
5. Peter deCliveland and wife
1342 A. D.
6. Robert deCliveland and wife
1368 A.D.
7. John deCliveland and wife
1398 A.D.
8. William Cleveland, Sheriff of York
1456 A.D.
9. William Cleaveland and wife
1480 A.D.
10. William Cleaveland and wife
1524 A.D.
11. Richard Cleveland and wife, Alice
abt 1550 St. Mary at Elms

12. Isaac Cleveland and wife, Alice
1583 1585

13. Moses Cleveland and wife, Ann Winn
1620, England 1629
died 1701/2 Woburn, Middlesex, Mass.

14. Josiah Cleveland (1) Mary Bates
b. 26 Feb 1666/ Woburn b. 8 May 1667
d. 26 Apr 1709, Canterbury, CT.

15. Josiah Cleveland (2) Abigail Paine
b. 07 Oct 1690 b. 5 Jan 1685/6
d. 09 Feb 1750

Generation 16. Josiah Cleveland (3)

b. 04 Apr 1713, Connecticut

d. 07 May 1793, Connecticut

m1. Sarah Lawrence on 15 Oct 1735

b. 07 Feb 1709, Plainfield, Connecticut

d. 05 Feb 1755, Canterbury, Connecticut

m2. Johanna (Waldo) Brewster, widow

Children of Josiah and Sarah:

1. Asa Cleveland, 01 Aug 1736

2. Lois Cleveland, 16 Sep 1739, Brooklyn, Ct.

3. Sarah Cleveland, bap. 21 Mar 1742 d. 23 Apr 1784

4. Moses Cleveland, 26 Jun 1744

5. Mary Cleveland b. 06 Jan 1748 (o.s.) my 4th great grandmother.

6. Lydia Cleveland, b. 25 May 1751 d. 30 Sep 1754

7. Josiah Cleveland (4) b. 03 Dec 1753 d. 30 Jun 1843

A Revolutionary War Hero.

Children of Josiah and Johanna:

8. Letitia Cleveland, b. 13 Feb 1757

9. Thankful Cleveland, b. 30 Dec 1759

10. Abigail Cleveland, b. 10 Feb 1762

THE BENNINGTON BATTLE MONUMENT

A monument to mark a key battle in the American Revolution, the Bennington Monument is one of a series of huge stone obelisks in the Northeast. It was designed by J. Phillip Rinn and stands 306 feet tall (93 meters). It is located at 15 Monument Circle, Bennington, Vermont.

The Battle of Bennington was not fought at this site, but about five miles away in Hoosick Falls, New York, and at the village now called Walloonsac, New York, on August 16, 1777. The combatants in this battle were Germans, British, Canadians, Indians and loyalist Americans from Major General John Burgoyne's British Army, pitted against American Colonists, largely made up of New England militia.

General Burgoyne had two major goals in dispatching his regiment to the site. First, he needed to capture many of the supplies he and his men needed for survival. A successful move on the Bennington Supply warehouse would ensure the British presence there. Second, he wanted to impress the New Englanders by sending out a well-equipped regiment. He selected Colonels Friedrich Baum, a Hessian mercenary and a Colonel Breyman to lead the forces into Bennington. Breyman came up with about 600 men and Baum about 650 men. Each Colonel was equipped with two 3-pounder guns.

Brigadier General John Stark commanded the American troops made up of nearly 1600 militiamen, gathered together by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain boys, and Seth Warner, recruiting militia from wherever men could be found to help. Among those answering the call was John Lawrence (1746) our 4th great grandfather, and a resident of the Bennington area. As one might imagine, the militia, wearing whatever clothes they had, were quite a contrast with the German infantry wearing blue coats and the Prussian style miter with a brass front plate. The Brunswick dragoons (cavalrymen) wore light blue coats, cocked hats and thigh length boots. The militia carried weapons they had available, a few had bayonets.

The account of the battle as found on the internet
<http://www.britishbattles.com/battle-bennington.htm> is as follows:

By August 1777, Major General John Burgoyne's army had forced its way south from Canada down Lake Champlain and then to Fort Edward on the Hudson River. General Schuyler lay with the American Army to the south of the Mohawk River junction on the Hudson, covering the New York state capital, Albany. The rebel

colonists' affairs in the North seemed at a low ebb, after the abject abandoning of Fort Ticonderoga and the hurried retreat.

But Burgoyne's circumstances were far from promising. His army had struggled through the heavy forest from Ticonderoga, building a road to carry the artillery and carts. Schuyler had systematically wasted the country leaving Burgoyne short of supplies and proper transport. His army had so few horses that the Brunswick dragoons were still on foot. The difficulties proved yet another reminder of the problems of campaigning in the vast forests of North America, experienced by every British general since Braddock in 1755.

The final blow was a letter from General Howe at New York. Howe informed Burgoyne that the main British Army was leaving to invade Pennsylvania, rather than attacking up the Hudson to meet him, as envisaged in the original plan for Burgoyne's campaign.

Burgoyne directed Colonel Baum to take a force to Manchester in Vermont, to the East of Fort Edward, to find horses for his dragoons and for the army's transport, to collect supplies of food and to overawe the area's rebellious colonists. At the last moment Baum's objective was changed to the town of Bennington on the basis of reports of quantities of supplies being held there.

The retreat of the Continental Army from Ticonderoga with the advance of the British Army had caused considerable alarm in Vermont and New Hampshire. Distrusting the aristocratic New Yorker, General Schuyler, who with General St. Clair was suspected of treachery in giving up Ticonderoga, the New Hampshire Council formed a militia brigade to be commanded by brigadier John Stark. Stark, a veteran of the French and Indian War and the New Jersey campaign, was highly regarded in the region and colonists flocked to join his force. His brigade lay in camp at Bennington. Colonel Seth Warner's Green Mountain Boys, licking their wounds after Hubbardton, were at Manchester.

As Baum advanced on Bennington his Indians ravaged the countryside. After a skirmish with a small force under Colonel Gregg, Baum advanced to the Wolloomsac River outside Bennington. From there Baum sent a dispatch to Burgoyne saying he intended to give battle to the Americans. It became clear to Baum that he was substantially outnumbered by Stark's force. He sent further more urgent messages to Burgoyne requesting support and Burgoyne ordered Colonel Breyman with his Regiment to march to Baum's assistance.

The battle took place on 16th of August 1777 before Breyman's slow moving column came up.

Baum's force lay in positions around the bridge over the Walloomsac River. Some of his troops were in the hastily prepared fortification on the south side of the river while others were on the north side. The main position was a redoubt built by the Brunswick dragoons and British riflemen on a hill half a mile back from the bridge.

For much of that day movement for both sides was held up by heavy rain. In mid-afternoon the American began their assault on the dragoon redoubt; Colonel Nichols and Colonel Herrick from the rear and flank. On hearing the firing, Colonel Hobart attacked the Tory militia entrenched on the near side of the river and Brigadier Stark stormed the main advanced body of troops.

All of Baum's positions collapsed, most of the soldiers and Indians escaping into the woods other than the dragoon redoubt, which became the focus of heavy fighting. Finally lack of ammunition forced a severely wounded Baum and the remnants of his dragoons to surrender. His force had been annihilated.

Sometime later Breyman's column approached the area. Stark, with Warner's newly arrived troops after an initial setback, attacked the Germans forcing them to retreat, suffering a continuous galling fire from the pursuing Americans until rescued by nightfall.

The German force suffered 900 casualties, killed or captured. The Americans suffered 70 casualties. The Americans captured 4 guns and many small arms.

Prior to the battle a serious clash was impending between Congress and the New Hampshire Council over Stark's refusal to comply with the instructions issued by Schuyler to bring his brigade to the army on the Hudson. Following the battle Stark was appointed brigadier in the Continental Army.

Bennington was a major battle in establishing the ability of the Americans to hold their own against regular European troops. It also made Stark one of the leading soldiers of the Revolution. As with every one of the American victories it did much to revive the colonists' flagging morale. The Bennington battle caused major casualties to Burgoyne's Army that could not be replaced.

References:

Fortescue, Sir John, *History of the British Army*
Ward, Christopher, *The War of the Revolution*

